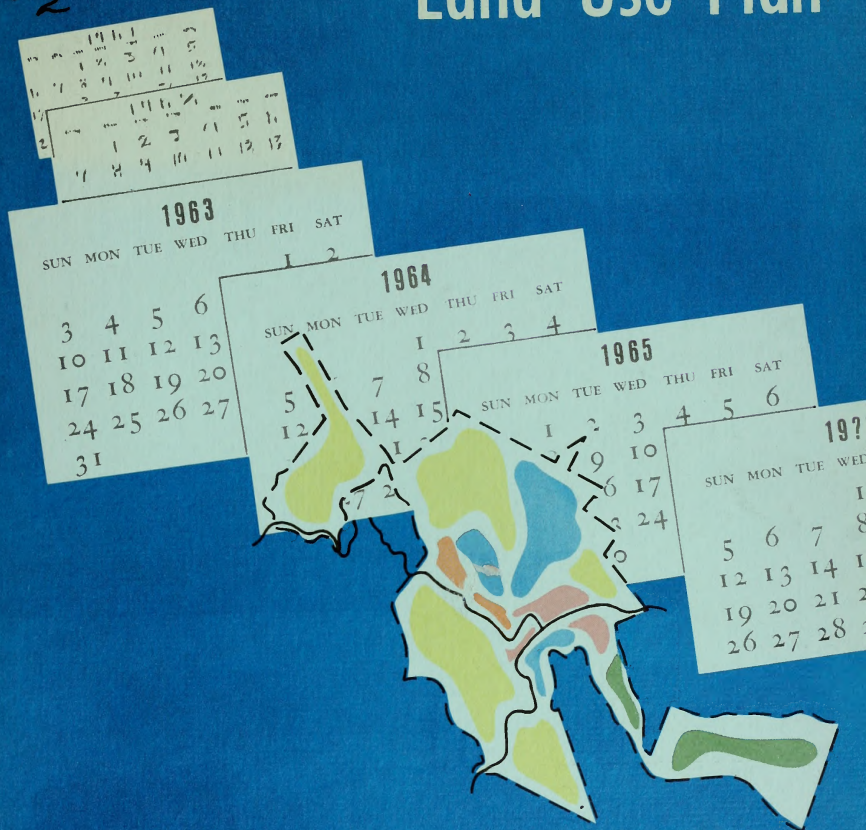


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Land Use Plan

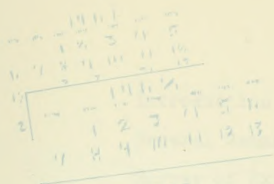


HOT SPRINGS

NORTH
CAROLINA



Land Use Plan



1963

SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT

3 4 5 6
10 11 12 13
17 18 19 20
24 25 26 27
31

1964

SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT

5 7 8
12 14 15

1965

SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT

1 2 3 4
9 10
17 24

1977

SUN MON TUE WED
1
5 6 7 8
12 13 14 15
19 20 21 22
26 27 28 29



HOT SPRINGS

NORTH CAROLINA

The preparation of this report, was financially aided through a Federal grant from the Urban Renewal Administration of the Housing and Home Finance Agency, under the Urban Planning Assistance Program authorized by Section 701 of the Housing Act of 1954, as amended.



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LAND USE SURVEY

INTRODUCTION

The manner in which land is used in a community affects the physical and mental well-being of its inhabitants. The location and density of housing development, the character of commercial land uses, the extent of industrial development and the potential for vacant land are all matters which must be closely studied in order to develop meaningful plans for the future. The Land Use Survey is an inventory of the various types of land uses: their location, size, density, and character. The basic information provided by the land use survey is used in analyzing existing conditions, pointing out particular problems in land use, and in forming a background for development of a land use plan.

The following steps were taken in the preparation of this report:

- Aerial photographs were obtained to help reveal the extent of development and the location of uses.
- Topographic maps of the area were prepared.
- New base maps were prepared and brought up to date.
- Field surveys of existing conditions were conducted to determine the location, type, and amount of land uses in various classes.
- The information obtained from field surveys was cross-checked with aerial photographs and plotted on base maps.

- Interviews and discussions with local citizens and officials were held to verify findings and to determine problem areas.
- Consideration was given to previous reports and studies prepared for the Hot Springs area.

GENERAL REMARKS ON EXISTING LAND USE

The major influences on the type and location of land uses in Hot Springs have been the natural barriers: the mountains and rivers, the major thoroughfares which bisect the town, and the railroad line. Other factors which have influence on the manner of land use are the broad flood plain adjacent to the French Broad River, the existence of large tracts of land in single ownership, and the availability of public utilities.

The geographic area for which the Planning Board is charged with the task of developing comprehensive plans includes the Corporate Limits of the Town of Hot Springs and the surrounding area which may reasonably be expected to be affected by growth. The unusual configuration and size of the Town of Hot Springs required that this area be somewhat modified to the extent that it would include the principal built-up areas of the town and the adjacent area which might conceivably be subject to urbanizing influences. For the purpose of this and succeeding reports, this area is termed the Hot Springs Planning Area.

SURVEY OF EXISTING LAND USE

Within the Planning Area, land uses were described and classified as follows:

Residential - Land on which a residence or structure is located for the purpose of providing a dwelling place to one or more families, households, or persons.

The residential uses were further described as:

Single Family - A detached structure constructed for the purpose of housing a single family or household.

Multi-Family - A structure designed for the purpose of housing two or more families or households.

House Trailers

Commercial - Land on which there is an establishment which provides commodities or services.

Industrial - Land on which is located an establishment used for the manufacture, production, or fabrication of products or goods.

Public and Semi-Public - Land which is used or on which are located facilities used for functions of a public or semi-public nature, such as schools, cemeteries, parks, and churches.

Transportation - Land on which are located streets, highways, rail lines, or terminals which provide stopping places for the interchange of freight or passengers.

Vacant - Land not being used for urban development.

Water Areas - That portion of river which is covered with water at normal spring flow.

A map showing Existing Land Use appears on page 4a.

The principal built-up portion of Hot Springs has developed around the two major highway routes which penetrate the town. Commercial development has generally taken place in areas bordering the highways, with a concentration of central commercial uses in one downtown block. Outside the central built-up area, development has been scattered, typifying the rural character of the area.

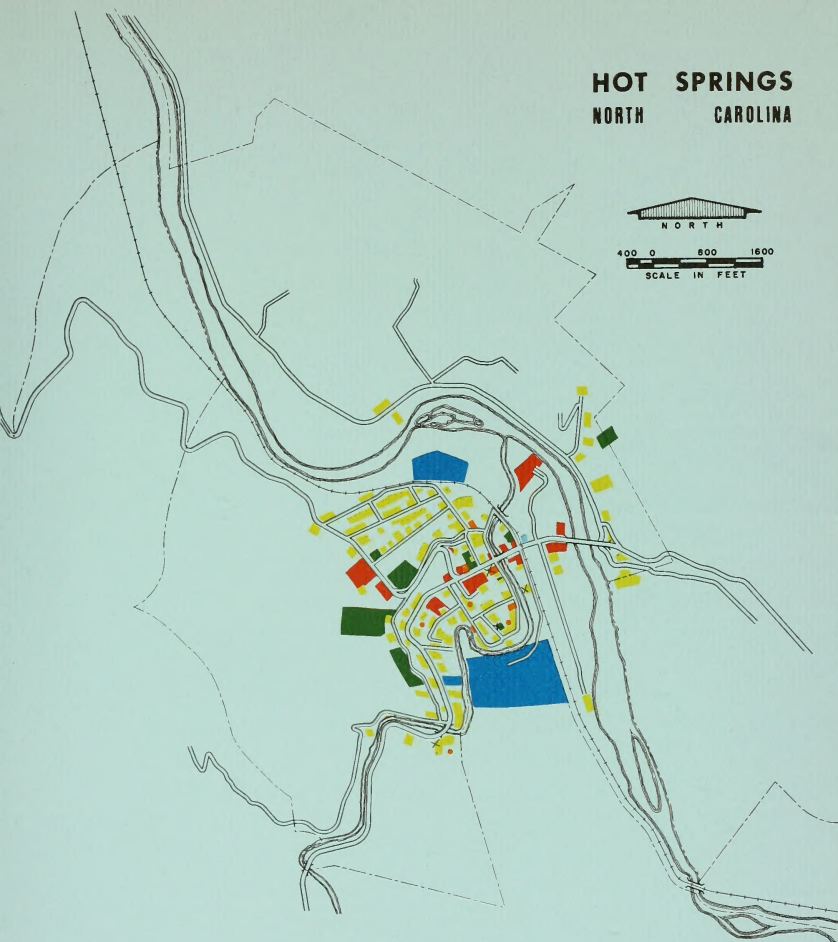
Residential Land Uses

Two fairly well-defined residential neighborhoods exist in the central Hot Springs area, north and south of Bridge Street. Within the planning area, a variety of residential land uses is found, including single and multi-family units, house trailers, rooming houses, and a few abandoned dwelling units.

HOT SPRINGS NORTH CAROLINA



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EXISTING LAND USE

- SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
- MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
- HOUSE TRAILER
- COMMERCIAL
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- PUBLIC & SEMI-PUBLIC
- X VACANT BUILDINGS

As pointed out in the report on the Population and Economy of Hot Springs, a substantial portion of dwelling units in the township were classed as Deteriorating or Dilapidated. There is no large concentration of such dwelling units: they are rather widely scattered throughout the area. If Hot Springs is to continue its planning program as well as the Workable Program for Community Improvement, more detailed study should be given to specific problems of residential neighborhoods.

Commercial Land Uses

The majority of commercial land uses border the major thoroughfares. In one small block in the downtown area is grouped a concentration of commercial establishments, with the remainder of the "strip" commercial type not unlike that found in many areas where no efforts have been made to influence or control optimum use of land. Along the highways are found retail and service establishments intermixed with residential and other uses not requiring frontage on a main boulevard. This scattering of commercial uses detracts from the drawing power of each of the establishments as compared to their attraction in an easily accessible compact central area. In addition to the adverse effect on residential uses bordering the highway, the random, strip commercial development likewise presents an unattractive appearance.

Although the majority of commercial land uses are scattered, there is a fairly compact "downtown" area comprising the central retail and service center of Hot Springs. This portion presents unique characteristics and problems. A variety of commercial uses, offices and apartment units is contained in this area.

A number of problems are evident in the Central Business Area.

- Despite some curb parking, there are few properly located parking areas for customers. The high amount of through traffic causes considerable conflict between pedestrian and vehicular traffic.
- Some of the structures are obsolete and ill-suited to the present land uses.
- In addition to the out-dated structures, many of them present an unattractive appearance.

Industrial Land Uses

There is little industrial development in the Hot Springs area. The largest single plant is the Burlington Industries textile manufacturing plant, located adjacent to the town to the south. The land areas in industrial use are adequately served with public water. The textile plant uses water principally for cooling purposes and constitutes the largest water consumer in the area.

The lumber plant to the north is the principal shipper of rail freight.

Transportation

In addition to the railroad terminal, now serving as a freight terminal almost exclusively, the principal land uses devoted to transportation are the rail lines, and streets and highways.

Rail Lines

The Southern Railroad's main line between Asheville and Knoxville runs directly through Hot Springs. In the early stages of Hot Springs' development, a high proportion of passenger traffic travelled these lines, constituting the major means of conveyance for the customers at the Hot Springs resort center. Today, around 25 freight trains daily come through Hot Springs. A passenger train going each direction makes one stop a day.

The rail line through the area follows the west side of the French Broad River, fairly close to the flood plain. The crossing at grade level with US-25-70 in the heart of town causes some delays, mostly to through highway traffic.

Streets and Highways

The existing street pattern is the result of no particular plan of development. The primary purpose of the existing streets other than the major highways has been to provide access to abutting land uses. Former foot trails which followed the contours of the land have in many cases become cross-town connectors with awkward intersections, restricted visibility and a lack of adequate turn-arounds.

Public and Semi-Public

The largest area in the central built-up portion devoted to public use is the school property. Other principal uses are churches, cemetery and the U. S. Forest Service. The Ranger Headquarters for the Pisgah National Forest is located in Hot Springs.

Vacant Land

This being a sparsely settled area, the greatest portion of land is not being used for urban development. Most of this land is in the outlying fringe area, although there still exist a number of vacant lots in the principal built-up portions of Hot Springs. This category of land use includes land with varying characteristics: farm land, forests, land with steep slopes, and land lying idle or otherwise undeveloped. The Pisgah National Forest borders the town and constitutes a major portion of the land area.

LAND USE PROBLEMS

The general pattern of land use in Hot Springs as reflected in the inventory above displays a relatively large physical area with low density and scattered development.

There has been relatively little construction activity in recent years and many structures have begun to display the symptoms of poor upkeep or neglect. Throughout the area abandoned dwellings, signs, and junk contribute to an overall dishevelled appearance. These problems are to be considered in analyzing land use in the Hot Springs area:

- Poor platting of land has resulted in odd-shaped parcels, some unusable or unsuitable for development. This increases the service costs to other land and affects efficient circulation of traffic.
- Intermixture of land uses creates unpleasant environmental problems and a mixture of conflicting types of traffic.
- Streets which are poorly laid out, with insufficient turn-arounds, limited right-of-way, and poor sight distance, reduce traffic capacity and increase accident hazard.
- The bisection of the town by major through highways interferes with local traffic circulation and optimum use of abutting property.

Despite the presence of vacant land areas which could conceivably be devoted to park or playground use, there is a notable absence of such public facilities.

Hindsight is invariably better than foresight and it may be necessary to point out that many of the problems presented in the Hot Springs area should have been foreseen and adequate preparations made for guided growth through a sustained community planning program. Many other communities have likewise discovered that the problems which have accumulated over a period of years will similarly take many years for solution. It is never too late to begin corrective action, however. Through sound and realistic plans, developed with the understanding of the citizenry, and a determined resolution on the part of civic and governmental leaders, Hot Springs can be guided toward the best possible development that existing conditions will permit.

LAND USE PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The Land Use Plan for the Hot Springs area attempts to provide a guide--or statement of policy--adopted by the governing body for the purpose of showing the most appropriate uses of land. The adoption of the Plan, along with land use controls and appropriate land development policies, will assist in bringing about optimum development when opportunities are presented.

It would be extremely hazardous, if not impossible, to attempt to designate a time period during which land development will occur. This plan, therefore, attempts to suggest the most appropriate uses of land that present conditions will permit. Unforeseen developments: a rapid spurt in highway improvements, economic development programs, urban renewal projects, or other conditions could bring about substantial changes in the Hot Springs area in a short period of time. The Plan should, therefore, be constantly under review as trends and conditions change. In such a manner, the Plan can be adjusted and remain a current document, reflecting the needs of the town.

MAJOR CONSIDERATIONS IN THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The problems encountered in existing land use outlined above will certainly not be overcome over a short period of time. The recognition of these problems, however, and a Plan to insure orderly and efficient land use will go far toward achieving a more favorable environment in Hot Springs. The Plan for the physical growth of the town should reflect the unique land development problems now existent and the consensus of the people as to the type of community Hot Springs should become. The Plan should encourage development in suitable locations and discourage a continued random scattering of uses which has frequently been detrimental to surrounding uses and to the overall community.

The suggested location of major land uses as shown on the Development Plan is based on the following considerations:

- New development should be encouraged in those areas now served with basic utilities.
- Objectionable or incompatible uses should be encouraged to re-locate.
- Uses which create noise, smoke, unpleasant odors or are otherwise objectionable should be located in such manner that they will not interfere with residential development.
- Commercial uses serving the highway traveller should be grouped together to reinforce the drawing power of all.

- New thoroughfares should be planned to border areas with high traffic generation.

The rate and character of land development in the past has produced no decided trend and provides few clues to future projections. In the light of this and the above consideration, the Plan is based on the optimum type of development that might occur in the area. One substantial industry or a major tourist magnet might provide the base on which a new economy could be built in the Hot Springs area.

- Needed highway improvements must be made and tied in with the Development Plan. Decisions on land use (the types of use bordering such highways, the prior reservation of needed right-of-way) will hasten planning and construction of the facilities.

- The extent of possible flooding conditions will markedly influence the type of development within the flood plain.

Although it is possible to adopt various types of land use controls (zoning, subdivision regulations) and Town policies (the extension of municipal services, maintenance of streets, etc.) which would regulate the type of development within the expected flood area, it is conceivable that these standards could be lowered or relaxed under certain conditions. If such development is contemplated by financing through other than private sources, however, those agencies of government,

whether state or federal, will discourage construction in the danger areas.

Although the railroad constitutes a major land use (and source of tax revenue) possibilities for location of industries requiring rail access appear small.

FACTORS INFLUENCING LAND DEVELOPMENT

The decisions of private and public developers alike have affected and will continue to affect the course of land development. The location of a grocery store, the expansion or curtailment of industrial activity will have a continuing influence on such matters as traffic generation or the use of residential land. Policy decisions by the Town Council such as granting or withholding municipal services will affect development. In addition to these intangible influences there are four main factors which will continue to influence the location and the rate of land development:

- The Availability of Water, Sewer, and other
Public Services
- Major Highway Improvements
- Vacant Land and Its Potential
- The Flood Plain

The Availability of Water, Sewer, and other Public Services

Hot Springs has an adequate supply of public water both for the present and for considerable future growth. Expansions in the public water system made in recent years provide the town with two reservoirs of 100,000 and 400,000 gallons capacity. The construction of new water mains in the north Hot Springs Area in 1958 of eight inch capacity provides the opportunity for additional growth in this area.

The Town has for many years piped its raw sewage directly into two rivers. Studies, recommendations, and engineering

reports culminated in a successful bond election in early 1964 to pay local share of additions to the sewage collector system and a sewage treatment plant. When finally placed in operation, public sewerage lines will be available to most of the developed area.

In addition to the influence of public water and sewer on the development of land, the availability of other public services such as streets, garbage collection, fire protection and the like play a role in shaping the location and type of development. The existing street system provides access to a considerable number of vacant lots which should be developed before public monies are used on additional streets or roads. Improvements to the existing system, to be discussed below, will help markedly in encouraging development of areas close in.

Other municipal services provided by the Town are limited in number and scope. Town policy provides for collection of garbage once each week from each residence, and two times a week from commercial and industrial plants located within the town limits. The fire station, fire truck and fire-fighting equipment are maintained with public monies which also support a part-time Fire Chief. Voluntary personnel are organized into a fire-fighting department which will answer calls within the area. While fire protection might be considered an important land use determinant in larger urbanized areas, due to the rural character of the Hot Springs Planning Area, and the

fact that the level of protection is relatively uniform, this factor is considered of minor significance.

Major Highway Improvements and Their Effect

The existing street and highway system has remained unchanged for several decades. As pointed out above, commercial development has tended to border the main highways. Other land development has followed no set pattern, being somewhat scattered and random in character.

Perhaps the single most important influence on future land development in this area would be major highway improvements. While US-25-70 is now the major artery from Asheville to Knoxville and carries high volumes of interstate traffic, the construction of Interstate 40 down the valley of the Pigeon River will drastically affect present traffic patterns. Since a number of commercial establishments now depend primarily on existing highway traffic, their continued growth and the possibilities for additional capital investment in tourist facilities must depend on major highway improvements to make Hot Springs more readily accessible. Improved access to the interstate by way of Spring Creek Gorge and major improvements in US-25-70 from Marshall to the Tennessee State Line will substantially benefit the area and offer new opportunities for growth.

While construction of Interstate 40 remains a number of years in the future, definite studies and recommendations

concerning possible major improvements or relocations in US 25-70 should be forthcoming by early 1965 from the State Highway Department. The location of an entirely new route will not only bring external forces to bear on the growth of Hot Springs, but will cause major internal effects on uses of land in the area.

Vacant Land and Its Potential for Development

A substantial amount of land is now presently available, serviced with public utilities and of a slope not considered excessive for development. Proper designation of these areas as to optimum land uses, together with policy measures and the legal tools to encourage such uses should go far toward insuring orderly development.

The Flood Plain

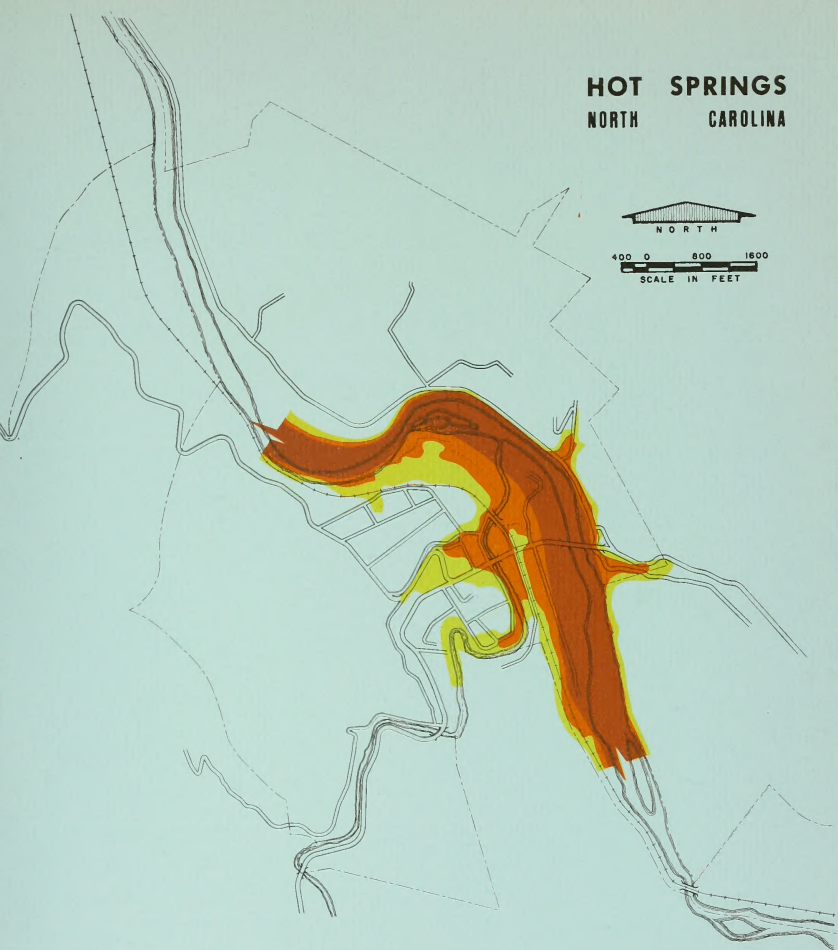
The wide low area bordering the French Broad River to the west has infrequently been inundated with resultant property damage. Studies of flood conditions conducted for the Town by the Tennessee Valley Authority have highlighted hazardous conditions and the necessity for taking precautions against future disasters. The extent of the highest known flood (July, 1916) and the Maximum Probable Flood which could occur are shown in the map on page 19a, together with the limits of a proposed Floodway. Since it would be impractical, if not impossible, to attempt any degree of protection against the Maximum Probable Flood, a more

likely approach should be to publicize the measures which could be taken to minimize flood damages in new construction within the limits of the highest flood on record.

HOT SPRINGS NORTH CAROLINA



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FLOOD MAP

- PROPOSED FLOODWAY
- JULY, 1916 FLOOD
- MAXIMUM PROBABLE FLOOD

THE GENERAL LAND USE PLAN

The Plan for future use of land within the area is shown on the map on page 20a. As the map indicates, land uses have been classified into the following major groupings:

RESIDENTIAL

COMMERCIAL

PUBLIC

INDUSTRIAL AND HEAVY COMMERCIAL

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

OTHER LAND

All of the above uses of land are interdependent and must be tied together by an adequate street and highway system. The Sketch Thoroughfare Plan presented in the next section of this report will outline major improvements that are needed or will be needed to facilitate the optimum development of the land areas.

Residential

As the map of Vacant Land indicates, a substantial amount of land is presently available for residential development. There are two fairly well-defined residential neighborhoods in Hot Springs, each of which contains vacant land suitable for development. Insofar as priorities concerning areas for development, town policies and land use controls should emphasize the use of these areas in preference to outlying, scattered development. Such priority is based on the

HOT SPRINGS NORTH CAROLINA



GENERALIZED LAND USE PLAN AND SKETCH THOROUGHFARE PLAN

- RESIDENTIAL
- COMMERCIAL
- PUBLIC
- INDUSTRIAL & HEAVY COMMERCIAL
- RECREATION & OPEN SPACES
- MAJOR THOROUGHFARE
- NEW R/W
- IMPROVED R/W
- CLOSED

following considerations:

- A residential neighborhood environment already exists in these two areas and continued residential development would enhance the desirability of living here.
- The two areas are close in, within convenient walking or driving distance to all community facilities, such as shopping areas, the school, churches.
- The existing street pattern, with some changes and improvements, will adequately serve the areas.
- The present water system and programmed sewerage improvements will conveniently service a great portion of these areas.
- Other community services--such as fire protection, garbage collection--can be more efficiently and economically rendered in these areas.

Housing Conditions

The relatively poor quality of housing in Hot Springs constitutes a problem which has been years in the making. Both private and public agencies must cooperate in recognizing the scope of the problem and in undertaking specific measures to improve the quality of housing. The Town has recently been successful in its efforts to obtain twenty new Public Housing units which will benefit greatly in offering low-rent housing to lower income groups. Along with the procurement of these units, the Town Council has adopted a Workable Program for Community Improvement and has obtained additional promises of federal assistance under other programs administered by the Housing and Home Finance Agency. Under the Workable Program, codes and ordinances have been adopted designed to eliminate substandard housing conditions and environmental problems that cause blight. Construction codes setting forth standards for new construction have been placed in effect, and a tentative schedule has been set for the adoption and implementation of a minimum Housing Code to apply to all dwelling units now in existence and to be constructed. Enforcement of this code--which could only come about through an intensive education program and accompanying public support--would insure the gradual upgrading of existing substandard units and the removal of dilapidated

structures. The implementation of the Housing Code should be coordinated with the administrative organization for other codes now in effect. Additional public housing should be used to assist in relocation of families to be displaced by code enforcement. Owners of houses in need of major repair might also seek federal assistance in the form of improvement loans and mortgage insurance from the Housing and Home Finance Agency.

Possibilities for long term, low cost housing exist through the provisions of the National Housing Act. Under Section 221 of this Act, buyers have discovered that home ownership is sometimes actually cheaper--and far more satisfactory--than the rental of substandard units. This type of financing is available under certain conditions to families being displaced by condemnation of unsafe homes under the Housing Code, or through displacement by other type of governmental action. In order for Hot Springs to be eligible to participate in this type of financing, continued progress under the town's Workable Program for Community Improvement must be evidenced.

Commercial

The attraction of commercial uses will be enhanced if they are grouped more compactly and offer the shopper or highway traveller convenience and ease of access. A mistake often made by communities is to designate or zone excess

amounts of land in commercial uses, with a resultant scattering or "strip" commercial development of a detracting nature. While it is beyond the scope of this study to attempt an economic projection of floor space needs, the land area designated as Commercial in the Plan, if entirely converted to such use, would amount to a substantial increase in commercial use. The major problem of commercial development, however, is not one of developing additional land now unoccupied, but rather of utilizing more efficiently the land areas now in commercial uses. This will mean conversion of obsolete and incompatible uses to higher types.

Ease of access and central location should be of foremost consideration in the development of commercial uses. The land areas designated on the Plan for Commercial uses meet these requirements, in the main bordering the major highway and in some instances extending back for some distance.

In considering the size and character of present land development in Hot Springs, two types of commercial areas are recognized and so recommended in the Plan. A distinct central commercial core area presently exists and, with some expansion, should serve as an area of intensive commercial uses: retail sales, amusement center, banks, professional offices, and other uses conducive to "one-stop" downtown shopping trips. The other commercial areas should contain uses which could exist in relatively independent locations.

Industrial and Heavy Commercial

Local promotion efforts to obtain new industry were successful in the past decade and it is reasonable to assume that continued efforts will be made to obtain industry of a type compatible with the economy of Hot Springs. Leaders in the town have recognized full well the intense competition they face in this quest. The steps currently being taken, together with the adoption of a comprehensive community growth plan and adequate codes and ordinances will form a basis toward making the town attractive for new types of investment. While the type of new investment in Hot Springs may take varied form, the land requirements for industry, heavy commercial (including large tourist attractions) are similar:

- gently rolling to level land free of flooding
- sites of adequate size to allow parking/loading and room for expansion
- availability of public utilities
- ease of highway access
- separation from conflicting land uses

In addition to the land owned by the present textile plant and available for expansion purposes, other land areas to the north of Hot Springs offer excellent opportunities for industrial and heavy commercial use. While it is impractical, if not impossible, to define the precise

character of the uses to locate in the areas designated on the Plan, encouragement should be given to investments offering new job opportunities, designed to attract "new money" into the area, and serving to complement the existing commercial and industrial establishments.

Public

Hot Springs' need for a public park has long been recognized. In addition to the need for a community park which could serve as the focal point for neighborhood and city-wide gatherings, a community center could be used as a multipurpose function. As indicated on the Land Use Plan, a tract of land in central Hot Springs bordering US 25-70 offers a convenient, central location as a public park and community center area. The center itself could begin as a modest structure, housing initially the municipal offices, the Public Housing Authority, public library, and Chamber of Commerce. In its central location, available to the community and easily located by visitors, the center and park area could prove a major asset to the community.

Specific proposals have been advanced for the re-use of land bordering the French Broad River to the west--the sites comprising the old hotel, resort area, and the former CCC Camp. The eventual development of this land will probably include some park and open spaces which would be available for use by local residents as well as serving as an added attraction to visiting tourists.

Recreation and Open Spaces

The area bordering the river presently contains a number of structures, including the resort hotel, which would suffer considerable damage in the event of another flood equal to the highest flood of record (July, 1916). The study requested by the town and conducted by the Tennessee Valley Authority in 1961 should be considered by private and public interests in planning uses within a potential flood area. The recent recreation study conducted for the Area Redevelopment Administration recognized the limits of development in this area and specified uses of low intensity, with structures which would sustain a minimum degree of flood damage. The Land Use Plan indicates the area adjacent to the French Broad River where recreation open space uses should be encouraged.

The report by the Tennessee Valley Authority included data showing the limits of flooding in the highest flood of record and also the limits of the Maximum Probable Flood, as indicated in the map on page 19a. Local developers should be made aware of the extent of possible flood damage. Where building within the danger limits, specific recommendations should be obtained as to flood-proofing measures.

Other Land

A significant portion of land in the planning area presents problems of varying scope for urban development. Among these problems are lack of highway access, remoteness from facilities and services, and excess topography. In addition, while not constituting a "problem" it is considered that land owned by the U.S. Forest Service will continue in its present ownership and devoted to the public use in accordance with that agency's long-range plans.

A number of state and federal programs are designed to assist the rural landowner in the proper conservation and utilization of his land. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, through the services of the County Farm Agent, has rendered invaluable assistance in analyzing soil conditions advising on proper farming techniques and increased crop production. The U.S. Forest Service, through its Ranger Station and technical staffs, will likewise assist in promoting better utilization of the products of the forests and soil. Presently in Western North Carolina there is an unfilled demand for more family outdoor camping sites with technical and financial assistance available to develop such areas.

In considering the possible future use and development of these areas, serious consideration should be given to protective measures which will help preserve the natural beauty of this section. The broad sweeping river and valley wending its way through towering mountains on both sides presents scenic panoramas in all seasons. In many other areas this beauty is marred by gaudy advertising signs, cheap tourist "attractions" or structures in need of repair or dilapidated. With the mushrooming tourist industry providing a great potential for all of Western North Carolina, the efforts begun by community leaders in Hot Springs to further develop tourist attractions should include measures to prevent undesirable development. As access is improved in scenic areas, roadside control of land uses, including advertising signs, could be adopted. Perhaps assistance could be offered private owners in clearing away eye-sores and removing junk, debris, and the like. With the cooperation of the State Highway Department, weeds and overgrown bushes which hide natural highway vistas could be cleared. In these and other ways the rural land could be more effectively used.

SKETCH THOROUGHFARE PLAN

Communities in North Carolina are encouraged to plan their future street and highway system in cooperation with the State Highway Commission. While actual programming and construction of highway facilities will be based on more comprehensive traffic, engineering and economic studies, a general consensus on the part of the community as to its future highway system based on the best possible knowledge of present and future land use will go far in the planning stage.

The location of residences and commercial establishments greatly affect the location and use of major streets and highways; conversely, their location within the urban area will sharply influence the rate and character of land development.

A Major Thoroughfare Plan takes a long-range look at the network for future street and highway construction and represents concepts--and projects--of broad scope and usually considerable expense. It must be viewed in a similar manner as the Land Use Plan: as a framework on which day-to-day decisions can be made.

An Ideal Thoroughfare System

Ideally, an urban area contains within it several kinds of streets, each designed to perform a different function. A street system so designed permits traffic to move from point of origin to point of destination with minimum

conflict and with reasonable directness and ease. Recognizing the limitations imposed by the unique problems of topography, size, economics and engineering in the Hot Springs area, a simplified sketch plan is submitted with the object of providing major benefits in future programming and construction of local streets and major highways. Some of these benefits are:

1. Local citizens will know where major thoroughfares will be developed and can plan residential and commercial construction knowing that conflicts in land use will not occur.
2. Land developers can design subdivisions so that subdivision streets will function in a non-conflicting manner with the overall plan.
3. School and park sites can be planned and located in desirable places with knowledge of land use and street system stability.
4. Reservation of needed right-of-way can be obtained well in advance and substantial savings effected. By designating an overall street and highway system, only that amount of land needed for right-of-way will be required.
5. Local officials will know what improvements are needed overall and can budget their funds accordingly.

6. By understanding the thoroughfare plan, and realizing where and when necessary construction will occur, much can be done to eliminate damage to property values and community appearance.

Major Highway System

The major highways (US 25-70 and NC 209) now penetrate the town, carrying a high proportion of through traffic. The convergence of traffic in the central area of Hot Springs creates congestion and delays. The possibilities for major widenings and improvements in the central area are somewhat limited due to the restricted right-of-way presently available and high-value property which directly abuts the right-of-way.

While US 25-70 is destined to continue for a number of years to serve as a major interstate traffic carrier, offering the most direct route between Asheville and Knoxville, the imminent construction of Interstate 40 will see major changes taking place in the type and volume of traffic carried.

The comprehensive report on the feasibility of establishing a major tourist attraction in the Hot Springs area* and subsequent conferences stressed the importance of planning major highway improvements together with such facilities. As the author of this report said in an

*Hot Springs, N.C.--The Feasibility and Economic Impact of New Recreational and Tourist Facilities. Hammer and Company Associates

interview, construction of a new highway or major improvements in the existing system are necessary to procuring necessary investment and offering ease of access to the potential user of these facilities.

For many years, discussion has taken place on possible major improvements to US 25-70 from Asheville to the Tennessee state line. The bypass around Marshall, construction of passing lanes and other improvements have been accomplished over the past six year period.

Ground surveys have been made for possible relocation of US 25-70 from the Marshall Bypass to the Tennessee State Line. It is expected that by early 1965, the extent of improvements, their location, and possible timing can be determined.

If engineering and cost considerations make necessary the use of existing alignment of US 25-70 over Mill Ridge, a continuation of the existing route through central Hot Springs should require:

- Widening Bridge Street
- Channelization of traffic and improved traffic engineering
- Reconstruction on West Bridge Street to bypass Serpentine Avenue and provide much improved alignment

Such improvements noted above would markedly improve the flow of traffic within the area. Costs would be well below that necessary for constructing a bypass. It is anticipated that NC 209 will follow its present alignment, but with construction of Interstate 40, improved access should be required by the addition of passing lanes, widening of curves and general surface improvement.

Local Street System

The improvements in the local street system include:

- abandonment of certain sections of local streets difficult to improve
- realignment to provide smoother flow of traffic
- new construction to facilitate optimum development of residential areas

The above recommendations concerning the major highway and the local street systems are, admittedly, of a more general nature than will be required in subsequent programming and construction stages. It is hoped, however, that these general recommendations can serve as a springboard from which additional study and consideration will be given to actual detailed requirements consistent with financial capability--both local and outside-- to accomplish the objectives.

State law requires that each municipality develop a comprehensive plan for a street system to serve both present and future needs in and around the municipality. The State Highway Commission stands ready to assist Hot Springs in development of such a plan and, after final completion, will reach agreement with the governing body as to which proposed streets and highways will definitely be a part of the State Highway System and which streets will be a part of the municipal street system. The Plan as finally agreed upon cannot be looked upon as a completed document, but must stand constant review in the light of changing conditions. The efforts spent in planning can only be justified if positive results in terms of new and improved facilities are forthcoming.

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